



REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Corporate Affairs Committee

REPORT FROM: Damian Szybalski, Sustainability Coordinator

DATE: August 26, 2010

REPORT NO.: PDS-2010-0056

RE: Green Meeting and Event Policy
File No.: D27-SU – Sustainable Meeting Practices

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PDS-2010-0056 (dated August 26, 2010) regarding a proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the recommendations of Report No. PDS-2010-0056 be approved as presented by the Corporate Affairs Committee and forwarded to Council for approval;

AND FURTHER THAT, effective immediately, the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy be approved for all future meetings and events of the Staff Sustainability Team, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee as well as all meetings and events organized by the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department;

AND FURTHER THAT, as part of a pilot phase, the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy be approved, in principle, as the minimum corporate Town policy for all meetings and events held at all Town facilities, pending the results of a future report from Town staff in mid-2011;

AND FURTHER THAT, upon completion of the pilot phase, Town staff be directed to report back to Council in mid-2011 with any necessary refinements to the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is three-fold:

1. To obtain approval to immediately apply the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy to all future meetings and events of the Staff Sustainability Team, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee, and the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department;
2. To obtain in principle approval for the proposed Policy to be applied to all Town meetings and events as part of a pilot phase, pending the results of a subsequent report from Town staff; and
3. Outline a “Phase-In Plan” which is recommended to be used to implement the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy.

BACKGROUND:

At its July 13, 2009 meeting, Council approved the recommendations of report PDS-2009-0059. In doing so, Council approved Terms of Reference for the creation of an internal Staff Sustainability Team.

The Terms of Reference for the Staff Sustainability Team stipulated ten initial tasks for completion by the Staff Sustainability Team. One of these tasks required the development of “Sustainable Meeting Practices”. The recommendations of this report (PDS-2010-0056) implement the latter deliverable of the Team’s Terms of Reference.

COMMENTS:

➤ *Green Meetings and Events*

A typical meeting or event can leave behind plastic name badges, disposable cups, disposable plates, plastic utensils and many pages of discarded paper. Further, during a typical meeting/event, unnecessary lights tend to remain on throughout the room and long after a meeting is adjourned. Projectors are left on long after they are not needed. Some attendees travel long distances to attend meetings, emitting harmful air emissions or do so while idling. Some meetings are unnecessary or could have been accomplished through teleconference or other means not requiring vehicle travel.

Clearly, meetings conducted in such a fashion cause adverse environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, and needless energy, water and paper use.

These environmental impacts can, however, be avoided or significantly reduced. This can be accomplished by adhering to green meeting and event practices. Environment Canada defines a “green meeting” as one that:

“...ensures that all aspects of an event, including its location, food services, transportation and the provision of materials are approached with pollution prevention in mind in order to reduce its environmental impact.”

➤ **Need for a Green Meeting and Event Policy**

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, offices are increasingly becoming major contributors to climate change, in addition to other adverse environmental impacts. Among other things this is caused by the (i) energy use associated with computers and data storage; (ii) electricity use; (iii) waste generation; and (iv) daily commuting and business travel which account for 20% of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Implementing the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy will enable the Town to reduce and avoid some of the negative environmental impacts associated with its office operations, particularly as they pertain to the holding of meetings and events. The proposed Policy will allow the Town to take a number of relatively simple actions which, collectively, can make a significant difference towards creating a more sustainable future.

Specific benefits to the Town that can materialize from the implementation of the proposed Policy include:

- Enhanced public image and an ability to lead by example;
- Differentiation of the Town in a positive way;
- Facilitation of a corporate paradigm shift whereby sustainability considerations become a natural part of everyday decision making;
- Creating a healthier and more desirable workplace;
- Better attraction and retention of employees by demonstrating the Corporation’s commitment to sustainability;
- Demonstration of corporate leadership. Since the Town is a major local employer, changes in its practices can potentially influence the types of products/services that are supplied and purchased within the community and hence support a market for more environmentally-responsible products and services;
- Achievement of eco-efficiencies through potential cost savings related to water, energy, food and office supplies;
- Reduction in the amount of waste directed to the landfill;
- Decreased greenhouse gas emissions;

- Reduced mileage travelled by Town staff and the associated costs incurred by the Town;
- Increased awareness of the need to host meetings and events in a more environmentally-responsible manner;
- Education of meeting participants (internal and external) about the benefits of sustainability without compromising attendee experience;
- Partial implementation of the recommendations of the Green Plan and the workplan of the Staff Sustainability Team; and
- Acting as a model for other community stakeholders to adopt similar policies thereby contributing to a community-wide paradigm shift to sustainability.

➤ ***Proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy***

Purpose, Vision and Goals

Recognizing the benefits of green meetings and events, in consultation with the Staff Sustainability Team and the Senior Management Team, the Office of Sustainability developed the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy. The components of the proposed Policy are highlighted in the pages that follow. Importantly, Appendix 'A' to this report contains the actual Green Meeting and Event Policy, including detailed rationale for each criterion contained within the Policy. Appendix 'A' contains the bulk of the information which forms the basis for the proposed Policy.

The stated Purpose of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy is:

To elevate the sustainability of the Town's internal corporate operations by embedding environmentally-responsible practices throughout all stages of planning and hosting all meetings and events at all Town facilities. This Policy recognizes the fact that the Town is a major local employer, and purchaser of goods and services. As such, the Town's practices can positively influence decision making by other community stakeholders in favour of more environmentally-responsible practices.

The stated Vision is:

All meetings and events held at all Town facilities are held in an environmentally-responsible manner, by reducing energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, waste generation and by making financially responsible purchasing choices that not only benefit the environment but are also financially prudent. The Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy is a natural part of operations and is widely duplicated throughout the community by a variety of community stakeholders thereby facilitating a community-wide shift to more environmentally-responsible practices.

The two stated Goals are:

To ensure that all meetings and events held at all Town facilities benefit the environment by reducing energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, waste generation and by making responsible purchasing choices that not only benefit the environment but are also financially prudent.

To be recognized as a leader for its environmentally-responsible meeting and event practices.

Policy Overview

The proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy is meant to establish **minimum** best practices for integrating environmentally-responsible practices into the Town's operations. As such, the Policy is worded in a fashion that provides flexibility while elevating the sustainability of the Town's corporate operations. Town staff are strongly encouraged to go beyond the proposed minimum Policy wherever possible, feasible and appropriate.

Guided by the PAREE Principle established for the Town's Green Plan, the proposed Policy is practical, affordable, reasonable, enforceable and educational. In the opinion of Town staff, the proposed Policy achieves a balance between improving the sustainability of the Town's corporate operations, while not being excessively onerous to implement.

To ensure Corporate-wide implementation and consistency, it is envisioned that (following the pilot phase) the proposed Policy will ultimately apply to **all** meetings and events at **all** Town facilities. As such, whenever possible, all Council, committee, staff, public, facility rental, external agency and any other meetings/events held at any Town facility would need to conform to the proposed Policy. By applying the proposed Policy (subject to any refinements) universally to all meetings and events, the Town will project a consistent message as to its commitment to sustainability.¹

It should be noted that, to a varying degree, some aspects of the proposed Policy are already being implemented, including default double-sided printing, use of non-toxic cleaning products, and the serving of beverages and foods using china rather than disposable serveware.

The 26 criteria which make up the Policy are arranged around seven key areas associated with the planning and hosting of meetings and events. These seven areas address:

- Pre-meeting/event planning and scheduling;
- Selection of a meeting location;

¹ It should be noted that some refinements to the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy may be required for situations where a Town facility is rented for a private function. The pilot phase will be used to identify any such modifications. In the meantime, however, the objective is to ensure the highest possible compliance with the proposed Policy.

- Activities during the meeting;
- Food and beverage service;
- Energy conservation;
- Recycling and reuse; and
- Post-meeting activities.

Each of the 26 criteria is outlined below. Detailed rationale for each criteria is presented in Appendix 'A' to this report.

Proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy Components

Pre-Meeting/Event Planning and Scheduling

1. Ask yourself if an in-person meeting is necessary. First, consider alternatives to in-person meetings such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing and webinars.
2. Prior to the meeting, inform all attendees of the Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy.
3. For meetings involving off-site attendees, schedule meetings so that those attendees can attend the meeting either on their commute to or from their place of employment.
4. Ask speakers to provide electronic copies of their material. Post these on a website or a sharing FTP site prior to the meeting to avoid printing. If necessary, provide attendees with documents on USB memory drives.

Selecting a Location

5. Choose a central meeting/event location that will require the least amount of travel and offer opportunities for alternative modes of transportation such as walking and biking.
6. Seek a meeting/event location that employs green building features such as energy efficient and natural lighting, room occupancy sensors, programmable thermostats, water efficient toilets, access to environmentally-responsible food and beverage services, recycling and composting facilities, secure bicycle parking and carpool parking.
7. Select the smallest space available that will comfortably accommodate all attendees.
8. If commuting to an off-site meeting, consider carpooling. When carpooling, use the more efficient vehicle.

During the Meeting/Event

9. Avoid printing and photocopying by holding paperless meetings/events. If printing is necessary, print double-sided and only in black and white. For PowerPoint slides use the handout feature to print multiple slides on one page rather than one slide per page. For all other documents, keep text as short as possible by using smaller font, minimum margins and reducing blank space while keeping the document readable. For all printing, use recycled paper and/or paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
10. Rather than printing hard copies of the agenda, display the agenda using an LCD slide projector.
11. Avoid using flip-charts. Instead use water-based, non-toxic markers and reusable white boards, or slides.
12. Collect and reuse all plastic or paper name tags and holders.
13. Use only non-toxic cleaning supplies.
14. Only provide give-a-ways, speaker gifts and awards that are made with recycled content, are environmentally responsible and are not over-packaged.

Food and Beverage Service

15. Use china service for all food and beverage services. Avoid disposable service ware such as paper or Styrofoam cups, paper napkins or table covers, plastic cutlery and disposable doilies. If china is not available, use compostable/biodegradable products and reusable cloth napkins.
16. Eliminate the use of plastic or wood stir sticks/spoons. Replace these with reusable (not plastic) spoons.
17. If possible, ensure that all condiments are placed in reusable and large serving containers, and not in individual packets.
18. Whenever possible, use foods that are locally grown and sourced, organic and in season. Use fair trade coffee. Place food orders only after confirming the number of attendees. If possible, donate any surplus food to local food banks.
19. Ensure that any food and beverage packaging is kept to a minimum and is recycled.
20. Offer vegetarian meal options.

Energy Conservation

21. Turn off all audio-visual equipment when not in use.

22. Reduce lighting levels to a minimum while maintaining comfort, safety and accessibility. Turn off all lights when the room is not in use.

23. Remind attendees not to idle when attending the meeting or event.

Recycling and Reuse

24. Ensure that recycling and green bin containers are located in the room. All containers should be well labeled.

25. Provide a tray with paper that has been printed only on one side for reuse for notepaper and fax cover sheets.

After the Meeting/Event

26. Distribute any follow-up communication electronically via e-mail, internet and voice mail rather than via hardcopy mailings.

➤ **Three Noteworthy Aspects of the Policy**

There are three noteworthy aspects of the proposed Policy which should be highlighted. These components pertain to:

- Potential budgetary or contractual obligations;
- Office supply purchases; and
- Local food procurement.

First, with respect to any matters associated with budgetary or existing contractual obligations, as outlined below under the “Phase-In Plan”, the Green Meeting and Event Policy is proposed to be introduced across the Corporation through a pilot phase extending to mid-2011. This pilot phase would be used by Town staff to identify any specific budgetary and/or contractual matters that may need to be addressed and brought to Council's attention as part of a future staff report, likely sometime in June 2011. At that time, Town staff would seek Council's final approval of the proposed Policy (amended or not) and direction to apply the Policy universally to all meetings and events held at all Town facilities.

Second, in order to not undermine the efforts of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy, wherever possible, Town staff will be encouraged to not re-order any office supplies whose use would be inconsistent with the objectives of the proposed Policy. Examples of such supplies include disposable plastic utensils. Any existing supplies would be used only until depleted or until any necessary contractual and/or budgetary arrangements are made.

Lastly, with respect to local food procurement, the Office of Sustainability is exploring the feasibility of introducing a mandatory minimum requirement for local food procurement. As outlined in more detail in Appendix ‘A’, Halton Region, Town of Markham and the City of Toronto are three municipalities which have introduced such

requirements. While Halton Region and the Town of Markham require that 10% of their food procurement is local (with an annual increase of 5%), the City of Toronto has set a 50% target for all its food procurement.

Town staff will explore the issue of local food procurement in more detail in light of the direction provided by Council while considering Report No. PDS-2010-0015 pertaining to the workplan of the Staff Sustainability Team at its May 25, 2010 meeting. In the meantime, the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy would direct Town staff to use foods that are locally grown and sourced, organic and in season – whenever possible.

➤ **Phase-In Plan**

The implementation of the Green Meeting and Event Policy is proposed to be phased-in through two phases, as outlined below.

During Phase 1, the *Pilot and Review* phase, the proposed Policy would be immediately applied to all future meetings/events of the Staff Sustainability Team, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee and all meetings/events organized by the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department. In addition, the Policy would be applied on a pilot basis to all other meetings and events held at all Town facilities.

This approach will enable Town staff to identify any necessary refinements to the Green Meeting and Event Policy. In addition, the pilot phase would provide time for any necessary adjustments to be identified to existing Town purchasing procedures/policies prior to seeking full Council approval.

In Phase 2, the *Full Implementation* phase, subject to any refinements and Council approval, the Green Meeting and Event Policy would apply to **all** meetings and events held at **all** Town facilities.

The specific components of the phase-in process are outlined below:

PHASE 1: Pilot and Review Phase – September 2010 to May 2011

September 2010 to April 2011

- Immediately apply the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy to all future meetings/events of the Staff Sustainability Team, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee, and the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department.
- All Town staff directed to ‘pilot’ the Green Meeting and Event Policy for all meetings and events held at any Town facility.
- In collaboration with facility managers, the Office of Sustainability will complete an assessment of all Town facilities where meetings and/or events are held to ensure that each facility has the necessary features/supplies in place to fully

comply with the proposed Policy. These features/supplies may include such things as non-toxic markers, white boards, non-toxic cleaning products, and reusable food and beverage containers. Any budget implications will be reported in a subsequent staff report.

- Information sessions will be held for all senior administrative staff informing them of the proposed Policy. Senior Administrators will be asked to communicate the Policy to staff within their respective departments.
- For all Town staff, information will be posted on the HUB and communicated via e-mail. Feedback will be directed to the Office of Sustainability.
- If feasible, the Office of Sustainability will work with Information Services staff to develop an electronic Green Meeting and Event Policy 'checklist' as well as a default message which will notify all meeting/event attendees/organizers of the Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy. This checklist will allow staff to easily and efficiently confirm that any meeting or event being scheduled will occur in accordance with the proposed Policy.

To provide flexibility and recognize the variety of meetings and events, this checklist will also enable a meeting organizer to indicate which green meeting/event criteria are being met and which are not applicable, if any. In the event that a particular criterion cannot be met, the meeting/event organizer will be asked to provide an explanation as to why not.

The completed forms would be collected by the Office of Sustainability. This information will be used to increase awareness of the proposed Policy, ensure compliance, identify any implementation challenges (e.g. budgetary constraints, lack of any necessary supplies), and to ensure continued effectiveness, improvement and accountability.

May 2011

- Town staff implementing/piloting the Green Meeting and Event Policy to provide the Office of Sustainability with any final feedback as to the Green Meeting and Event Policy.

PHASE 2: Full Implementation – June 2011 and onwards

- Office of Sustainability reports back to Council with any necessary refinements to the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy. At that time, Town staff will seek Council's final approval of the Policy. If approved, the Green Meeting and Event Policy would apply as the minimum standard to all meetings and events held at all Town facilities.
- Plaques visually depicting the Green Meeting and Event Policy will be installed in every meeting and event room throughout the Corporation.

- To facilitate a community-wide paradigm shift towards sustainability, the Office of Sustainability will encourage and assist community stakeholders to adopt similar policies – if they have not done so already (e.g. Halton Hills Hydro, Chamber of Commerce, Acton BIA, Georgetown BIA and school boards).

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Strategic Plan captures the concept of sustainability through its Strategic Directions and Strategic Objectives. The implementation of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy should enable the Town to conduct its operations in a more environmentally-responsible and sustainable manner.

Relevant sections of the Strategic Plan include Strategic Direction H: Provide Responsive, Effective Municipal Government, and the associated goal to provide strong leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Although the implementation of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy is not expected to cause the Town to incur any significant additional costs, Town staff will report in more detail on this following the pilot phase.

Although some initial costs may be incurred for such items as the purchase of additional chinaware, in the long term, the Town should actually benefit from savings. These savings may accrue as a result of energy savings, reduced food and beverage costs, the use of reusable serviceware and reduced employee mileage costs.

It is also important to note that, at this time, no changes are proposed to the Town's existing contracts, including those associated with the provision of food and beverage services. Any necessary modifications to existing contracts would be reported on at a later date.

Additional information on financial impacts, if any, will be reported on through a subsequent staff report. On a preliminary basis, it may be recommended that each department cover the costs associated with such things as the installation of Green Meeting and Event Policy plaques within their respective meeting/event rooms, as well as the purchase of any necessary items required to meet the food and beverage criteria of the proposed Policy. Alternatively, a separate budget allocation may be sought from Council.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:

Widespread and ongoing communication of the proposed Policy will be key to ensuring its effectiveness. If the Policy is approved, Town staff will ensure that it is widely communicated according to the Phase-In Plan outlined in this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

The implementation of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy has three key environmental impacts:

- The proposed Policy will help to elevate the sustainability of the Town's corporate operations by embedding more environmentally-responsible meeting and event practices, and by making them normal practice. In doing so, the proposed Policy can help decrease energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and the amount of waste generated. In addition, it is hoped that the proposed Policy will be widely duplicated throughout the community thereby magnifying the Policy's positive benefits and fostering a community shift towards sustainability.
- This Policy is one of the deliverables of the Staff Sustainability Team.
- Certain aspects contained within the proposed Policy help implement a variety of Green Plan recommendations relating to the theme of energy efficiency, water conservation, greenhouse gas emissions and local procurement. For example, Recommendation #40 of the Green Plan calls on the Town to "Encourage all Halton Hills Council and Committee meetings to move to electronic-based meetings and agendas. This could result in substantial savings with paper and distribution costs." In addition, Recommendation #67 of the Green Plan calls on the Town to develop full scale Energy Management and Green Procurement Programs, operational policies to govern the Corporation's activities, as well as set an example for local residents and businesses.

CONSULTATION:

In preparing the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy, the Senior Management Team and the Staff Sustainability Team were consulted. If the proposed Policy is approved, additional consultation will occur with key stakeholders, including Senior Administrative Assistants, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee, facility managers and any other appropriate stakeholders.

CONCLUSION:

This report has:

- Sought approval to immediately apply the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy to all future meetings/events of the Staff Sustainability Team, Town Environmental Advisory Committee, Town Sustainability Advisory Committee, and the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department;

- Sought approval (in principal) to apply the proposed Policy to all Town meetings and events as part of a pilot phase, pending the results of a future report from Town staff in mid-2011; and
- Outlined a Phase-In Plan recommended to be used to implement the proposed Policy.

Although the success of the proposed Policy largely depends on changing employee behaviour, the Senior Management Team and the Staff Sustainability Team are excited about the prospects of the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy and its ability to reduce the environmental impacts associated with typical meetings/events, as well as to facilitate a paradigm shift towards sustainability.

As a starting point, the proposed Policy sets minimum standards and encourages Town staff to go beyond the Policy whenever possible, feasible and appropriate. For example, Town staff may consider asking that the Policy be applied voluntarily (at least in part) to events that are supported and/or sponsored by the Town, but not actually held at a Town facility. In addition, in order to gather additional 'green' suggestions and to do so on an ongoing basis, the Office of Sustainability intends to soon proceed with the installation of 'Green Suggestion Boxes' at key Town facilities, including Town Hall, Gellert Community Centre, the Acton Arena and Community Centre and the two libraries.

The proposed Policy will further embed sustainability within the Town's corporate operations, while providing Town staff with the flexibility needed to address unique meeting and event requirements. In addition, the proposed Policy is another way to instigate positive change throughout the Corporation towards a more sustainable future.

Town staff is of the opinion that the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy meets the PAREE Principle and is, therefore, practical, affordable, reasonable, educational and enforceable.

Respectfully submitted,

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B.D. MacLean, BA, MCIP, RPP
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APPENDIX 'A' to Report No. PDS-2010-0056

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS MINIMUM GREEN MEETING AND EVENT POLICY

1.0 Purpose

To elevate the sustainability of the Town's internal corporate operations by embedding environmentally-responsible practices throughout all stages of planning and hosting all meetings and events at all Town facilities. This Policy recognizes the fact that the Town is a major local employer, and purchaser of goods and services. As such, the Town's practices can positively influence decision making by other community stakeholders in favour of more environmentally responsible practices.

2.0 Vision

All meetings and events held at all Town facilities are held in an environmentally-responsible manner, by reducing energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, waste generation and by making financially responsible purchasing choices that not only benefit the environment but are also financially prudent. The Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy is a natural part of operations and is widely duplicated throughout the community by a variety of community stakeholders thereby facilitating a community-wide shift to more environmentally-responsible practices.

3.0 Goal

3.1 To ensure that all meetings and events held at all Town facilities benefit the environment by reducing energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, waste generation and by making responsible purchasing choices that not only benefit the environment but are also financially prudent.

3.2 To be recognized as a leader for its environmentally-responsible meeting and event practices.

4.0 Definition of a "Green Meeting"

A "green meeting" is one that "...ensures that all aspects of an event, including its location, food services, transportation and the provision of materials are approached with pollution prevention in mind in order to reduce its environmental impact." (Environment Canada)

5.0 Green Meeting and Event Policy: Criteria and Rationale

Criteria	Rationale
Pre-Meeting/Event Planning and Scheduling	
<p>1. Ask yourself if an in-person meeting/event is necessary. First, consider alternatives to in-person meetings/events such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing and webinars.</p>	<p>If an in-person meeting/event is not necessary, especially in cases where attendance is required by persons attending from off-site locations requiring a vehicle commute, opting for teleconferencing and/or webinars will minimize the need for vehicle travel. In turn, this will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and associated climate change impacts, as well as mileage and food costs.</p>
<p>2. Prior to the meeting/event, inform all attendees of the Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy.</p>	<p>Informing all attendees of the Town's Green Meeting and Event Policy will ensure that attendees are aware of the Policy, as well as the Town's commitment to enhancing the sustainability of its internal operations.</p> <p>Having informed attendees will ensure that they can actively participate in green meetings/events by being prepared by, for example, attending a meeting/event by carpooling with another attendee. Ultimately, a paradigm shift will be facilitated whereby sustainability considerations are a natural part of the Town's decision making processes.</p>
<p>3. For meetings/events involving off-site attendees, schedule meetings so that those attendees can attend the meeting/event either on their commute to or from their place of employment.</p>	<p>Scheduling meetings/events at the beginning or end of the workday will enable off-site attendees to incorporate their attendance into their existing morning or afternoon work commute. Consequently, this will eliminate the need for a stand-alone and unnecessary commute to a meeting/event,</p>

	thereby reducing vehicle emissions and the associated environmental impacts and mileage costs.
4. Ask speakers to provide electronic copies of their material. Post these on a website or a sharing FTP site prior to the meeting/event in order to avoid printing. If necessary, provide attendees with documents on reusable memory drives.	Distributing meeting/event material electronically can reduce paper use, supply costs and the associated environmental impacts.
<i>Selecting a Location</i>	
5. Choose a central meeting/event location that will require the least amount of travel and offer opportunities for alternative modes of transportation such as walking and biking.	Transportation and the resulting vehicle emissions cause some of the most significant environmental impacts. By reducing the number of attendees that need to commute to a meeting/event and/or decreasing the distance that must be travelled, the environmental impacts associated with vehicle emissions will be reduced (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions and energy use).
6. Seek a meeting/event location that employs green building features such as energy efficient and natural lighting, room occupancy sensors, programmable thermostats, water efficient toilets, access to environmentally-responsible food and beverage services, recycling and composting facilities, secure bicycle parking and carpool parking.	<p>The selection of a meeting/event location that employs environmentally-friendly features will assist with the implementation of the Green Meeting and Event Policy.</p> <p>Holding a meeting/event at a green location will also provide an opportunity to showcase the Town's green facility features. A green meeting can also increase productivity. For example, according to the David Suzuki Foundation, increasing the amount of natural light in the workplace can noticeably increase staff productivity.</p>

<p>7. Select the smallest space available that will comfortably accommodate all attendees.</p>	<p>Making efficient use of the smallest meeting/event space available will help reduce unnecessary energy use by decreasing lighting, heating and/or air conditioning needs. For example, it would be more efficient to hold a four-person meeting in a smaller room that can comfortably fit those four attendees, rather than do so in a room designed to accommodate 20 attendees.</p>
<p>8. If commuting to an off-site meeting, consider carpooling. When carpooling, use the more efficient vehicle.</p>	<p>According to the David Suzuki Foundation and Statistics Canada, the average Canadian spends the equivalent of 36 eight-hour days commuting to and from work each year. This large amount of commuting translates into greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air emissions and significant travel expenses – in addition to decreased employee productivity and employee fatigue.</p> <p>Carpooling is an effective option for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than driving solo to a meeting, carpooling involves two or more individuals making the same commute together in one vehicle. For each additional individual in the carpool, one vehicle is removed from the road. Therefore, if three Town staff carpool together, two vehicles would be ‘removed’ from the road as well as their associated air emissions.</p> <p>For example, a Town employee making a single-occupancy 70 kilometer round-trip to attend a meeting at Halton Region’s offices in Oakville will release approximately 2.3 kilograms of carbon dioxide for every liter of gasoline used. Assuming a vehicle fuel consumption of 8.6 litres per 100 kilometers, the 70 kilometer commute would consume about 6 litres of fuel and cause carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide emissions are a key contributor to climate change.</p>

Given the large number of trips made by Town staff each year to various meeting locations throughout the Greater Toronto Area and beyond, single occupant vehicle trips are likely resulting in significant greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. An added benefit of carpooling is reduced fuel costs for Town staff and reduced mileage costs for the Town.

The efficiency of carpooling can be further increased by using the most efficient vehicle for the trip. For example, while a 2010 Toyota Prius consumes only 3.7 litres of fuel per 100 kilometers and has estimated annual carbon dioxide emissions of about 1,700 kilograms, a pickup truck would consume significantly more fuel and have greater greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information, a good resource to consult is the Natural Resources Canada's Fuel Consumption Guides at: www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca

During the Meeting/Event

9. Avoid printing and photocopying by holding paperless meetings. If printing is necessary, print double-sided and only in black and white. For PowerPoint slides use the handout feature to print multiple slides on one page rather than one slide per page. For all other documents, keep text as short as possible by using smaller font, minimum margins and reducing blank space while keeping the document readable. For all printing, use paper with a minimum recycled content of 30% and/or paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council

Double-sided printing can be an effective way of significantly reducing paper use, thereby reducing office supply costs and the environmental impacts typically associated with paper production, including forest cover loss, biodiversity loss, waste generation, greenhouse gas emissions and the release of chemicals such as chlorine which may be used to bleach paper. In theory, if all Town printing were done double-sided, the volume of paper used by the Town could be decreased by up to 50%, depending on a variety of factors such as the length of print jobs, availability of

(FSC).

machines capable of double-sided printing and the use of the default double-sided print function.

Based on a very preliminary estimate, between May 2007 and May 2008, at significant cost, the Town purchased over 1.7 million sheets of paper (white letter and legal paper size only). This is enough paper to reach a height of over 170 meters when the sheets are stacked horizontally on top of each other. If stacked vertically end to end, this paper would exceed 10 kilometers in height.

Starting in September 2008, the Town implemented default double-sided printing. Since the implementation of default double-sided printing, very preliminary estimates suggest that, between May 2009 and May 2010, the amount of paper used at the Town actually increased slightly. This may have been due to large volume printing for certain projects, among other potential factors. To reduce paper usage, the default two sided printing setting will need to be better 'enforced' and steps taken to avoid printing whenever possible in favour of distributing information in electronic form and/or exploring the use of new tools such as social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube). In addition, any future purchases of printers by the Town should take into consideration the ability of such equipment to properly print double-sided documents.

With respect to the use of more environmentally-friendly paper, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international certification system used to certify paper and wood products derived from responsibly managed forests based on a set of environmental and social standards. These standards help avoid environmental degradation such

as forest conversion to plantations and biodiversity loss.

The use of recycled paper can benefit the environment. Recycled paper decreases the need for 'virgin' paper and hence forest products as it is, at least partially, composed of waste or previously used paper. This waste paper can either be derived from post-consumer sources (i.e. paper which has previously been used by a consumer and then recycled into new paper) or pre-consumer sources (i.e. waste paper derived during the process of making paper). If using recycled paper, strive for paper which has the highest content of recycled material – at minimum 30%.

It should be noted that, compared to 'regular' paper, there is a premium for FSC Certified and/or recycled content paper.

One option to increase the use of FSC Certified and/or recycled paper while minimizing costs is to use the latter paper for all meeting/event-related printing, while setting a goal of purchasing a minimum amount of FSC Certified and/or recycled paper for all other office use. Initially, this target can be 10%, increased by 5% each year thereafter. A gradual increase in the use of more environmentally-responsible paper would offer an opportunity to include any budgetary implications in future departmental budgets.

Printing in a more environmentally-responsible manner can also be achieved by avoiding printing in colour since colour printing is more energy intensive.

When making the most efficient use of the space available on the page in order to reduce paper use, caution should be taken to meet the requirements of the Town's Style Guide.

	<p>Lastly, to move towards paperless meetings, whenever possible, consideration should be given to purchasing technology such as computer tablets which allow for documents to be displayed, edited and notes taken directly on the computer screen.</p>
<p>10. Rather than printing hard copies of the agenda, display the agenda using an LCD slide projector.</p>	<p>Displaying the meeting agenda using an LCD slide projector will eliminate the need to print paper copies, thereby reducing paper and ink use. Be sure to turn off the LCD projector as soon as it is no longer needed.</p> <p>If an LCD projector is not available, but paper copies of the Agenda are still necessary, ask attendees to share a smaller number of printed agendas – always printed on FSC Certified and/or recycled paper.</p> <p>If the meeting is anticipated to be brief, a hardcopy agenda may be unnecessary.</p>
<p>11. Avoid using flip-charts. Instead use water-based, non-toxic markers and reusable white boards, or slides.</p>	<p>The use of flip-charts increases paper use and contributes to the environmental impacts associated with the paper industry. Using white boards, markers and electronic slides can help avoid these impacts.</p> <p>If the use of flip charts is necessary, ensure that the flip chart paper has high recycled content (minimum 30%) and/or is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified.</p>
<p>12. Collect and reuse all plastic or paper name tags and holders.</p>	<p>Following larger meetings where name tags may be required, waste is generated whenever name tags are not properly recycled. To avoid this, all name tags should be collected from attendees and reused for future meetings</p>

	and/or properly recycled if no future meetings are planned.
13. Use only non-toxic cleaning supplies.	Chemicals used in cleaning products can have harmful effects on environmental and human health. Using non-toxic cleaning products can help avoid these effects.
14. Only provide give-a-ways, speaker gifts and awards that are made with recycled content, are environmentally responsible and are not over-packaged.	By purchasing environmentally responsible gifts, the Town's commitment to sustainability will be reinforced. Suitable gifts and awards may include those made with recycled content (e.g. bags and mugs made from recycled plastic, frames made of reclaimed wood), reusable shopping bags, refillable water bottles, products made by local artisans, and trees planted in someone's name.

Food and Beverage Service

15. Use china service for all food and beverage services. Avoid disposable serveware such as paper or Styrofoam cups, paper napkins or table covers, plastic cutlery and disposable doilies. If china is not available, use compostable/biodegradable products and reusable cloth napkins.	Disposable food and beverage containers create unnecessary waste and require repeated energy use as they need to be manufactured and repurchased once disposed. For example, disposable paper plates (despite often consisting of recycled paper) deplete forests, consume large amounts of energy during the resource extraction, manufacturing and transportation stages, and cause polluting air emissions. Because they are disposable, paper plates and other disposable products, consume these resources every time that they are manufactured, repurchased and used. To further decrease environmental impacts, only run a full dishwasher and only use environmentally-friendly non-toxic
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	<p>dishwasher soaps that do not contain chemicals such as perfumes and phosphates which contribute to algae blooms. A good resource is the EcoLogo^M website: www.ecologo.org</p> <p>The use of reusable china not only has the potential to significantly reduce landfill waste, but can offer a better quality experience to attendees.</p>
<p>16. Eliminate the use of plastic or wood stir sticks/spoons. Replace these with reusable (not plastic) spoons.</p>	<p>Disposable plastic utensils create a large volume of waste, use large amounts of energy and are more expensive in the long run as they have to be continually repurchased.</p> <p>According to the Environmental Defense Council "...using 1000 throwaway plastic teaspoons consumes over 10 times more energy and natural resources than making one stainless steel teaspoon and washing it 1000 times."</p>
<p>17. If possible, ensure that all condiments are placed in reusable and large serving containers, and not in individual packets.</p>	<p>Avoiding the use of individual packets for ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, jelly, butter, sugar, salt, pepper and other condiments will reduce packaging and hence the amount of waste generated.</p>
<p>18. Whenever possible, use foods that are locally grown and sourced, organic and in season. Use fair trade coffee. Place food orders only after confirming the number of attendees. If possible, donate any surplus food to local food banks.</p>	<p>Food accounts for about 25% of our ecological footprint (David Suzuki Foundation).</p> <p>The term "food miles" is often used to describe the distance travelled by food from the location at which it is grown to where it is consumed.</p> <p>According to a study commissioned by the Region of Waterloo Public Health, foods commonly eaten within Waterloo Region travel an average of about 4,500 kilometers. In turn, these food imports cause nearly 52,000</p>

tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually. To put this in context, 52,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions is equivalent to nearly 17,000 cars being driven for one year.

Importantly, the Waterloo study found that all of the studied food imports can be replaced by produce that can be grown locally within south-western Ontario. Replacing imports with locally grown produce would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 95% or the equivalent of taking over 16,000 cars off the road. On average, the studied imports caused 19 times more emissions compared to sourcing the same foods from south-western Ontario.

For example, beef imports account for over 15,700 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually and generate about 667 times more emissions than local beef. Another example is that imported pears cause over 5,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions or about 561 times the emissions of a local product.

The use of local produce supports local agriculture, Ontario's farm economy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with importing food over long distances, addresses climate change, reduces toxic air emissions (which contribute to acid rain and smog), strengthens the food supply chain, provides a source of nutritious food, and reduces the use of pesticides and herbicides which are used to prevent the growth of moulds and fungus on foods during long-distance shipping. Organically grown foods avoid the use of chemicals, antibiotics and hormones.

According to the Metcalf Foundation, in addition to the

negative environmental impacts associated with food imports, Ontario's food supply chain is not self-sufficient as it relies heavily on imports. This makes it vulnerable to disturbances in food supply chains (e.g. widespread power outages, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, emergency border closures). By some estimates, for example, at any time, Toronto only has three days of food supply, while smaller urban areas have even less.

Purchasing local food also supports the Halton Fresh Food Box program established for Town staff established by the Office of Sustainability. To date, Town staff has purchased thousands of pounds of fresh produce – much of it local.

Going forward, Town staff will explore the feasibility of establishing a minimum local food content requirement for Town food service vendors and caterers. One approach to accomplish this may be to adopt a local food procurement policy similar to those put in place by Halton Region, Town of Markham and the City of Toronto.

At Halton Region, as of April 2010, the Region's food service contractors are committed to buying fresh, locally grown and sustainable foods. Through an agreement with Local Food Plus, an award-winning non-profit organization that nurtures regional food economies by certifying farmers and processors for local sustainable food production and helping them connect with buyers of all types and sizes, initially 10% (based on dollar value) of the food brought to the Halton Regional Centre cafeteria will be sourced from certified farmers and processors who follow a set of strict sustainable practices. The objective is to increase the local food content by 5% in subsequent years and to add the requirements to

other Regional service areas such as long-term care and child care facilities.

At the Town of Markham, in May 2008, Council approved a requirement for the Town's catering service provider at the Civic Centre cafeteria to purchase a minimum of 10% of its material and produce from Ontario farmers. After the first year, the minimum purchase requirement will rise by an additional 5%. Local Food Plus has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Markham to monitor and implement the program. According to the Town of Markham, the availability of local sustainable foods has increased significantly. Currently, there are about 200 Local Food Plus certified Ontario farmers.

At the City of Toronto, a minimum local food purchase requirement of 50% has been set for all City food services. This target is measured in terms of the dollar value of the food purchased rather than in terms of food weight as weight is inconsistent among products. As part of a pilot study relating to the implementation of its local food procurement, to date, the City has managed to ensure that about 20% of its food purchases are local.

In addition to purchasing locally grown and organic foods, the environmental impacts associated with food and beverage services can be further avoided by purchasing fair trade coffee. "Fair trade coffee" is said to result in better wage, working, social and environmental conditions for the coffee producers.

Lastly, confirming the number of attendees will help reduce the amount of food waste and costs. According to the David

	<p>Suzuki Foundation, about half of the global food production is wasted. As this food waste biodegrades in landfills it produces methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas. In addition, when food is wasted, the food and the resources used to grow (e.g. water) and transport (e.g. fuel) the food are also wasted.</p>
<p>19. Ensure that any food and beverage packaging is kept to a minimum and is recycled.</p>	<p>Packaging can create large amounts of waste. Purchasing foods and beverages that use minimum packaging will reduce the amount of waste, place less demand on recycling facilities and reduce the amount of resources (including energy) that are consumed to produce packaging.</p>
<p>20. Offer vegetarian meal options.</p>	<p>Vegetarian meal options have a lesser environmental impact when compared to meals based on meat. This is due to the fact that the raising of food animals consumes more energy, water and other production inputs such as chemical fertilizers when compared to the growing of vegetables and grains.</p> <p>Globally, according to the David Suzuki Foundation, meat consumption accounts for about 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
<i>Energy Conservation</i>	
<p>21. Turn off all audio-visual equipment when not in use.</p>	<p>Energy use can be reduced by turning off all audio-visual equipment that is not being used. If using a power bar, turn the power bar off to eliminate the Phantom Load – a situation when electronics continue to use power event if they are not turned off. If a power bar is not being used, physically unplug any appliances. This includes laptops</p>

	and projectors.
22. Reduce lighting levels to a minimum while maintaining comfort, safety and accessibility. Turn off all lights when the room is not in use.	Eliminating unnecessary lights use can reduce energy consumption. According to the David Suzuki Foundation, energy use at a typical office building accounts for 19% of its total expenditures. The greatest energy savings can be achieved by focusing on building lighting, heating and cooling systems. Approximately 44% of the electricity used in a typical office building is spent on lighting.
23. Remind attendees not to idle when attending the meeting or event.	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions are a major contributor to climate change, air pollution, and human and environmental health degradation. One source of these greenhouse gas emissions is unnecessary vehicle idling which produces carbon dioxide whenever fuel is burned in a vehicle's engine.</p> <p>According to Natural Resources Canada, for every litre of gasoline burned, about 2.3 kilograms of carbon dioxide are produced. Idling a car with a 3-litre engine for 10 minutes wastes over one cup of fuel. Ultimately, idling wastes money and fuel.</p>
<i>Recycling and Reuse</i>	
24. Ensure that recycling and green bin containers are located in the room. All containers should be well labeled.	The proper use of recycling and green bin containers can significantly reduce the amount of waste produced. For example, following the introduction of green bins to the Town Hall building, Town staff and visitors are anticipated to be able to divert the equivalent of about 230 large garbage bags of waste from the landfill each year. In turn, increased waste diversion has the potential to prolong the lifespan of

	landfills and decrease costs to the taxpayer, while benefiting the environment.
25. Provide a tray with paper that has been printed only on one side for reuse for notepaper and fax cover sheets.	The reuse of paper can decrease the overall amount of paper used, reduce supply costs and benefit the environment.
<i>After the Meeting/Event</i>	
26. Distribute any follow-up communication electronically via e-mail, internet and voice mail rather than via hardcopy mailings.	Electronic communication can decrease the overall amount of paper used, reduce supply costs and benefit the environment.

APPENDIX 'B' to Report No. PDS-2010-0056
-References-

In addition to discussions with internal staff through the Senior Management Team and the Staff Sustainability Team, the proposed Green Meeting and Event Policy is based on information from numerous sources, including the following:

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2. United States Environmental Protection Agency, *It's Easy Being Green! A Guide to Planning And Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings And Events*, September 1996.
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4. Convention Industry Council, *Convention Industry Council's Green Meetings Report* (April 6, 2004, updated June 15, 2004)
5. Concern Inc., *How to Plan a Sustainable Event*
6. Deborah Fleischer, *Six Steps to the Greenest Meetings Possible*, October 5, 2008
7. BlueGreenMeetings, *10 Easy Tips*
8. Environmental Defense Fund, EDF Letter, *An Ounce of Prevention: Think Ahead Before You Buy*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, June 1998.
9. MeetGreen.
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11. David Suzuki Foundation, *David Suzuki at Work*, 2009
12. Metcalf Foundation, *Food Connects Us All – Sustainable Local Food in Southern Ontario*, February 2008